



## Rebuild by Design

### Hudson River Project: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge

#### Citizen Outreach Plan

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is committed to robust community and stakeholder outreach processes throughout the course of what will be a multi-year effort to plan, design and implement the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - selected Rebuild by Design (RBD) project, Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge, located in Hoboken, Weehawken and Jersey City. Because the State of New Jersey is the grantee receiving CDBG-DR funds, a detailed Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) is in place and can be found on the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) website at

[http://www.renewjerseystronger.org/wp-](http://www.renewjerseystronger.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CITIZEN_PARTICIPATION_PLAN_3-13-13.pdf)

[content/uploads/2014/11/CITIZEN\\_PARTICIPATION\\_PLAN\\_3-13-13.pdf](http://www.renewjerseystronger.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CITIZEN_PARTICIPATION_PLAN_3-13-13.pdf). The CPP requires that a Citizen Outreach Plan (COP) specific to the RBD project area be developed to serve as a supplement DCA's existing CPP. The primary goal of the project-specific COP is to provide a transparent and inclusive community outreach and public participation plan allowing all citizens and stakeholders in the Hudson River region the opportunity to participate in the planning, design and implementation of the project. More information about the Hudson River RBD project concept is available online here:

<http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov>

Community stakeholders will be engaged during the feasibility/environmental review (planning), design, and construction (implementation) phases of the projects. In developing this COP, the State complied with all HUD citizen participation plan requirements described in Section VI of Federal Register Notice FR-5696-N-11 and will comply with the public

involvement requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR Sec. 1506.6 Public Involvement, as well as the State's Language Access Plan (LAP), which is available at [http://www.renewjerseystronger.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NJ-DCA-LAP\\_Version-1.0\\_2015.01.14-for-RenewJerseyStronger.pdf](http://www.renewjerseystronger.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NJ-DCA-LAP_Version-1.0_2015.01.14-for-RenewJerseyStronger.pdf).

The goal of the Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge COP is to engage and collaborate with the general public, including vulnerable and underserved populations, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency, as well as municipal officials, community organizations and the academic community, in the RBD planning, design and implementation processes. The purpose is to solicit relevant input and provide timely information throughout the environmental review.

This COP will guide the engagement of stakeholders in the Hudson River region and solicitation of their input on the proposed project through a multi-faceted public participation process that includes: the establishment of an Executive Steering Committee, an Outreach Subcommittee, and Citizen Advisory Groups; Public Meetings; a dedicated website; an email listserv; a citizen complaint procedure; and press releases. The outreach strategies and techniques specific to the Hudson River Project are further described below.

### Executive Steering Committee

The Hudson River Project will have an Executive Steering Committee. The role of the steering committee is to collaborate, exchange information and provide a forum for committee members to provide input to the NJDEP throughout all phases of the project, from feasibility through construction. The steering committee will discuss and attempt to build consensus on the direction of the project, project schedule, project related policy issues and concerns raised to the Mayors and the NJDEP by the public.

The steering committee will be chaired by the NJDEP Commissioner and/or his delegates, and will also include the NJDEP RBD project team members, the mayors and their staff from Hoboken, Weehawken, and Jersey City. Other critical entities will be periodically incorporated into this committee as needed.

The Executive Steering Committee is an advisory board. All final project decisions will rest with the Commissioner of NJDEP as the recipient of CDBG-DR/RBD funds and the agency responsible for implementation of the RBD project.

### Outreach Subcommittee

A dedicated Outreach subcommittee will be established for the project. This subcommittee's sole responsibility will be outreach. This will include identifying stakeholders and incorporating input from vulnerable populations. This committee will be populated by representatives of state and local governments. The outreach subcommittee will report up to the Executive Steering

Committee through the Project Management Team. The first task of this subcommittee is to establish a comprehensive outreach plan that describes how local groups will be engaged in the project development. The subcommittee will be expected to significantly leverage the knowledge of local government officials or representatives who are best positioned to know the stakeholders, neighborhood leaders and vulnerable populations in their areas, and the most effective way to engage them in the RBD process.

### Citizen Advisory Group/Outreach Committee

The Hudson River Project will have dedicated Citizen Advisory Groups (CAGs) in each of the three cities. The purpose of the CAGs is to provide a forum for exchange of information between the Outreach Subcommittee and key citizens and citizen groups representative of that community. CAG members will be responsible for bringing issues and concerns to the table as well as sharing information from the Executive Steering Committee and NJDEP with their constituents, including members of vulnerable populations. The CAGs will be composed of representatives from a variety of communities within each town.

The mayors and/or their representatives will be responsible for working with the NJDEP Constituent Services Manager to identify members of their communities who will populate the CAGs in each of the three cities.

Each CAG will communicate with the Outreach Subcommittee representative(s) of their town, who will bring issues and information to the larger Executive Steering Committee. CAG members will supplement the knowledge of local government officials or their delegates about the project areas and provide input on ideas, problems, observations and solutions.

Specifically, CAG members will be expected to:

- Share information about Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge project goals and objectives with their constituents;
- Share the processes and procedures that will be followed in implementing the project;
- Determine what community priorities or concerns exist about the project as it develops;
- Bring the priorities, issues and concerns of the larger community to the attention of the Outreach Subcommittee, and
- Share with the Outreach Subcommittee and project team what local networks DEP should use to establish and maintain a dialogue.

The role of the NJDEP will be to provide project updates, explain processes and procedures on the various phases of the project, solicit input from stakeholders and the public, and answer questions during CAG meetings.

The role of the mayors will be to host the CAG meetings and general public meetings, and work with the NJDEP Constituent Services Manager and RBD Project Team on the logistics and scheduling of meetings. At major milestones, the three municipal-level CAGs may convene to meet together as one large group, identified as the Regional CAG.

The NJDEP will notice all Regional CAG meetings on the NJDEP's OFHRRM website and inform the public signed up for the NJDEP email listserv. All the NJDEP's Regional CAG meetings are by invitation only to Regional CAG members; however they are open to the public to observe. If any members of the public wish to represent their municipal CAG or find out the date, time and location of any separate municipal CAG meetings, they may contact their municipal Outreach Subcommittee member below or visit the following websites:

Hoboken: Vijay Chaudhuri - [Vchaudhuri@hobokennj.gov](mailto:Vchaudhuri@hobokennj.gov)

Juan Melli - [Jmelli@hobokennj.gov](mailto:Jmelli@hobokennj.gov)

Website: [www.hobokennj.org](http://www.hobokennj.org)

Hoboken Nixle Notification System ([local.nixle.com/city-of-hoboken](http://local.nixle.com/city-of-hoboken))

Hoboken Facebook and Twitter

Jersey City: Douglas Carlucci - [Dcarlucci@jcnj.org](mailto:Dcarlucci@jcnj.org)

Naomi Hsu - [HsuN@jcnj.org](mailto:HsuN@jcnj.org)

Website: [www.jerseycitynj.gov](http://www.jerseycitynj.gov)

Jersey City Facebook and Twitter

Weehawken: Giovanni Ahmad - [Gahmad@tow-nj.net](mailto:Gahmad@tow-nj.net)

Michael Kilkeary - [Mkilkeary@tow-nj.net](mailto:Mkilkeary@tow-nj.net)

Website: [www.weehawken-nj.us](http://www.weehawken-nj.us)

Weehawken Facebook and Twitter

## Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Outreach

Outreach efforts associated with the Hudson River Project and the COP will be coordinated with the public engagement requirements found in 24 CFR Part 58 (Environmental Review Procedures for Entities Assuming HUD Environmental Responsibilities) for environmental impact statements. EIS requirements include: the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS; public meetings; public hearings, scoping sessions, and the Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds. Several concepts/alternatives will be advanced through an environmental evaluation. This will result in a draft EIS. The draft EIS will be published in the Federal Register and posted on the Flood Hazard website with a 90 day public comment period. A public hearing will be held 15 days after the draft EIS is published (during the 90-day PC period). This public hearing will also serve as the hearing required for the Action Plan Amendment (APA) (Substantial Amendment for the Third Allocation of CDBG-DR Funds: Rebuild by Design.)

Public comments will be reviewed, and responded to in a “Response to Comment” document. Adjustments will be made, as needed, to the draft EIS. The final EIS will be published for a 30-day comment period.

The goal of the EIS portion of the COP is to conduct early and continuing outreach that will be timely, broadly disseminated, and responsive to stakeholder needs. The plan will be structured and executed through a phased approach consistent with the project phases and will be designed to meet pertinent needs and circumstances as they are developed. The early and often coordination and the input from stakeholder groups will influence the selection of three Build Alternatives and the recommendation of a Preferred Alternative.

A key goal of the stakeholder and public outreach process is to gain an understanding of the community and its needs and desires in regards to the flood risk reduction system.

The outreach associated with the feasibility analysis and EIS will be coordinated through one regional Citizen Advisory Group (CAG). While Hoboken, Weehawken and Jersey City have separate CAGs, in order to foster constructive dialogue, these groups will meet together as one Regional CAG as part of the NEPA process.

This Regional CAG will meet at important milestones, detailed below, to foster working relationships, to conduct the necessary public outreach to keep the affected communities apprised, and to ensure public input into each phase of the Project as it moves forward. It is anticipated that each of the city CAGs will meet more frequently or as needed and required by the members.

Below are the proposed milestones which represent important consensus points. Due to the level of interest in the Project, up to two CAG meetings may be held at each of the Project milestones. Additionally, three public meetings will be held throughout the EIS schedule. Furthermore, a

formal public hearing will be held at the end of the feasibility phase when a draft Environmental Impact Statement has been created. The Project Manager and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from Dewberry will attend each meeting to help inform stakeholders and the public about technical aspects that are being addressed.

#### Purpose and Need Meetings

The purpose of these meetings will be to obtain input on the Project's Purpose and Need so that the planning of the Project can continue within the NEPA framework. Stakeholder participation and input during this phase of the project is of great importance, as it will facilitate the effective development of the remainder of the project. During these meetings, the design team will listen and collect concept ideas provided by the various stakeholders and subsequently review these ideas/concepts as part of the feasibility analysis.

#### Scoping/Data Gathering Meetings

The purpose of these meetings will be to obtain public input on the draft Purpose and Need and initiate the scoping process, which will frame the Project as it moves forward. The project team will promote stakeholder coordination over the life of the Project, and identify important issues among participants. The goal of the scoping meetings is to obtain public input on the broad project goals. A summary of existing deficiencies in the Project Area will be presented by the Project Team for input by the participants. Baseline environmental data will be introduced to allow community input on areas of further study and/or concern. The meetings will also inform the stakeholders on the various disciplines that will be researched and the methods that will be used.

#### Screening Criteria/Metrics Meetings

These meetings will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to understand and contribute to the development of criteria to be used during the concept screening process. The goal of these meetings is to obtain public input on what constraint criteria (i.e. construction cost, ROW impacts, cultural resources, etc.) will be included in the concepts screening matrix as well as what metrics will be utilized for each constraint criteria. Dewberry's SMEs will be on hand to explain what each metric means and provide advice as to how it should be incorporated within the screening matrix. Various display materials will be used as part of the meeting, including but not limited to display boards and "PowerPoint" presentations. At the conclusion of these meetings, the input provided will be utilized to frame the format for the concept screening matrix.

#### Concepts Screening Workshops

Building upon the previous meetings, we will hold workshops to present a detailed review and screening of the concepts developed to date. The concept screening matrix will be developed with input from stakeholder groups informed by the team's Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and will be used to evaluate each concept on its impacts to the many resources within the

Study Area. This process will allow for the elimination of concepts that least satisfy the project's Purpose and Need. The three concepts that are ranked the highest will be advanced as the project's Build Alternatives, which will be analyzed further.

#### Alternatives Analysis Workshops

The purpose of these meetings will be to present a review of the three Build Alternatives advanced for further study. An Alternatives Analysis Matrix will be developed; this matrix will be more nuanced than the concepts screening matrix in comparing the key areas of environmental and engineering constraints. The information gathered in the data gap surveys will inform the meeting participants on the impacts of each alternative. As with the concepts screening meetings, Dewberry will attend each meeting with a matrix preliminarily filled out, and SMEs will be present to explain how each alternative was ranked. The stakeholders will provide input as to whether they feel the ranking should be adjusted. The ultimate outcome of this process will be the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

#### Public Meetings and Public Hearing

In addition to the above stakeholder milestone meetings, there will be three Public Meetings for the general public: the first following the Scoping/Data Gathering Meetings; second following the Concept Screening Meetings; and third after the Alternatives Analysis Workshops. A formal public hearing will be held at the end of the feasibility phase when a draft Environmental Impact Statement has been created. A stenographer will be present to record public comments at that hearing. All meetings will be held in a location that is easy for attendees to reach (transit and ADA accessible) and at a time of day and during the week convenient for the most people. Spanish language translators will be available. Agendas and handouts will be prepared in English and Spanish. People unable to attend the meeting can provide written comments as well. A response to comment document will be prepared and posted on the RBD website.

The three public meetings and one public hearing described above will be open to the public. Per HUD regulations, a public notice will be posted in the local media at least 15 days prior to the date of these meetings.

#### Working Group Meetings

In addition to these meetings and the public hearing, additional meetings can be held in the event stakeholder groups wish to spend further time with the SMEs to examine issues at certain project milestones.

#### Additional Outreach Mechanisms

The NJDEP has several locations in Hoboken, Jersey City and Weehawken that the public can view copies of outreach materials. The locations are as follows:

Hoboken City Hall Clerk's Office at 94 Washington St. from 9am to 4pm weekdays and Hoboken Public Library reference desk at 500 Park Ave. during normal business hours.

Jersey City at the Jersey City Public Library's Jersey Room at 472 Jersey Ave. during normal business hours.

Weehawken City Hall at 400 Park Ave. from 9am to 5pm weekdays and at the Weehawken Public Library at 49 Hauxhurst Ave. during normal business hours.

## Vulnerable Populations

The Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge COP includes transparent and inclusive outreach to community groups that serve vulnerable and underserved populations, including racial and ethnic minority populations, persons with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities. Representatives from these communities will be part of the Hudson River CAG and they will assist the project team in identifying the communication networks that reach the broader underserved and vulnerable population. All outreach to these populations will be in accordance with 24 CFR Part 570 (HUD Community Development Block Grants) and the Voluntary Compliance Agreement and Conciliation Agreement between HUD and the Latino Action Network, Fair Housing Center, and the NJ State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The State of New Jersey defines vulnerable populations as: "Individuals or groups whose circumstances present barriers to obtaining or understanding information, and/or to preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters, including those who have limited access to critical resources, those with limited English proficiency, seniors, and the disabled and medically or mentally compromised."

Information will be made available in forms accessible to persons with disabilities and persons of limited English proficiency (LEP) at the three public meetings and all public hearings. This will include the use of language identification cards or "I Speak" cards when engaging in direct contact with the public, and use of the toll-free interpretation service when someone identifies him/herself as an LEP individual. The toll free number for Sandy Recovery information is 855-SANDYHM. The caller should indicate the appropriate language and they will then be connected to the interpreter line. All documents defined as "vital documents" will be translated into Spanish and made available in the other languages listed in the LAP upon request. For this program, vital documents shall include all written materials requesting input and participation from the public. A "language disclaimer" will be included on all printed materials intended for public outreach, consistent with the LAP.

Notices of public hearings will be translated into Spanish and made available in the other



languages identified in the LAP upon request. Notices of public hearings will also indicate that interpreters can be made available upon request to attend the public hearings to provide interpretation services to attendees.

In addition, the NJDEP will coordinate with the Office of Environmental Justice for additional opportunities for outreach to vulnerable populations.

### Public Meetings/Listening Sessions – all residents

The NJDEP and its partners will also provide additional opportunities for input, comment and participation through regular public meetings. These meetings will take place at key project milestones such as feasibility, design, and construction, or at the request of Executive Steering Committee members. These meetings will not be formal public hearings, but rather forums for an exchange of information between the public and the RBD Project Team. RBD Project Team members will give status updates and presentations, and the public will be given an opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns.

Some of the information that will be shared at meetings includes:

- Project goals and objectives;
- Explanation of the process and procedures that will be followed in implementing projects;
- Explanation of the design options and the merits and challenges of each design, and
- Open discussion and Q&A.

### Ongoing Outreach

The NJDEP is committed to keeping the public informed of progress on the development and implementation of the RBD projects. Accordingly, the NJDEP has established an Office of Flood Hazard Risk Reduction Measures (OFHRRM) website at [www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov](http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov) and an email has been established for the public to ask questions, and make comments at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/floodhazard/rbd-hudsonriver-subscribe.htm>. The NJDEP's website will have outreach material and notifications regarding all regional CAG and public meetings in English and Spanish.

Additional ongoing outreach includes:

- Press releases at key project milestones;
- An electronic email (listserv) for citizens and stakeholders to sign-up and receive information and notification of status updates;
- Fact Sheets and Newsletters in English and Spanish;
- Public Meeting Announcements and Project Flyers, and
- Social Media

## Action Plan Amendment

After the completion of the draft EIS, the State will develop an Action Plan Amendment in accordance with the requirements of Federal Register Notice, Docket No. FR-5696-N-11 (Oct. 16, 2014), and specifically Section VI.6.b of that notice. In accordance therewith, the Action Plan Amendment will detail an RBD Project that comports with the selected RBD proposal to the greatest extent practicable and appropriate, and complies with all notice requirements including those pertaining to Benefit-Cost Analysis and certifications. As required by HUD, the Action Plan Amendment will be posted for public comment in English and Spanish for at least 30 days. The EIS public hearing will also serve as the required hearing for the Action Plan Amendment. Comments from the public hearing will be incorporated into the Action Plan Amendment prior to submittal to HUD. HUD then will have 45 days to approve the APA. The EIS process may proceed while the APA is under review by HUD.

## Resist, Delay, Store Discharge Specific Outreach Goals and Strategies

Per the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Action Plan, Section 4: Outreach and Public Comment for RBD Projects, each RBD project must establish a subcommittee made up of state and local officials who will work with stakeholders on the development of an outreach plan that will be specific and unique to its community. This subcommittee is expected to leverage the knowledge of officials and stakeholders and vulnerable populations to identify the most effective strategies to engage the public in the RBD process. This section represents the work of the subcommittee in completing that directive.

### **Hoboken Communication Plan**

#### Goal:

To work with the State/Dewberry team to develop engaging materials and a process that

promotes the Rebuild by Design/NEPA process and timeline by establishing a communication network for ongoing dialogue and input by key stakeholders and stakeholder groups on issues, concerns and information sharing related to the various stages of development of the Rebuild by Design Flood Control project.

Key Stakeholders:

- 1) Hoboken Housing Authority Residents
- 2) Property owners and tenants in areas most prone to flash flooding (primarily areas in Western Hoboken)
- 3) Property owners and tenants in areas vulnerable to storm surge (coastal)
- 4) Businesses
- 5) Vulnerable populations such as elderly, families with small children. Individuals with disabilities or medical conditions.

Method:

Engage Community Advisory Group and allow CAG leadership and members to serve as surrogates in partnership with State and City to discuss RBD/NEPA with local groups and constituencies. Organize community meeting(s) in coordination with NEPA-required hearings/meetings

*Groups and constituencies:*

Churches/Religious Groups

- Provide Reverends, Pastors, Rabbis etc. with information to distribute to congregations
- Churches in Hoboken with active membership:
  - o Church of God of Prophecy
  - o Church of Our Lady of Grace and St. Joseph
  - o St. Ann Church
  - o St. Francis Church
  - o The Community Church of Hoboken
  - o Saints Peter and Paul
  - o In Jesus Name Charities
  - o Mt. Olive Baptist Church
  - o Latin American Pentecostal Church
  - o United Synagogue of Hoboken
  - o Chabad
  - o All Saints Episcopal Parish

#### Businesses and Chamber of Commerce

- Partner with Hoboken Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and other civic/business groups to spread word to local businesses and stores
  - o Outreach can include roundtable discussions, project presentations, email blasts, flyers for local patrons, etc.

#### Local Schools

- Visits to local schools and outreach to students
  - o Distribute flyers to students to promote RBD process at start of school year
  - o Coordinate and reach out to PTA and PTSO groups
  - o Outreach can include:
    - Resiliency efforts in Hoboken
    - Impact of climate change and how it impacts flooding (i.e. higher sea levels means increased flooding)

#### Hoboken Housing Authority

- Outreach through flyers
  - o Partner with CERT Team and Housing Authority volunteers to assist with literature drops
- Reserve space in Housing Authority newsletter
- Brief Housing Authority residents during Housing Authority Board meetings
- Co-partner with community groups to sponsor community meetings for Housing Authority residents, including:
  - o Jubilee Center
  - o HOPES
  - o True Mentors
  - o Boys and Girls Club

#### Building Associations adjacent/near waterfront and low lying areas:

- Tea Building
- Maxwell Place
- Shipyard

#### Additional methods of outreach:

#### Colleges

- Collaborate with local universities to assist with outreach regarding climate change
  - o Focus on environmental studies majors, who are engaged with climate change and are aware of severe flooding risks to locations throughout the country
  - o Ask Universities to provide students or professors with knowledge

of climate change to help serve as experts on adaptation

- Colleges/Universities in Hudson County include:
  - o Stevens Institute of Technology
  - o St. Peter's University
  - o Hudson County Community College
  - o New Jersey City University
  - o New Jersey Institute of Technology

#### Social Media/Technology

- Utilizing twitter, Facebook, and other social media tools to educate the public
- Using movable/engaging demonstration project for use at community events
- Utilize surveys (also work with CAG members to distribute to constituencies and collect)

#### Tour of flooded areas

- Promote public tour of flooded areas in Hoboken in early October and use as tool to promote Rebuild by Design process
- Tour is held as part of Hurricane Sandy anniversary event

#### Groups assigned to CAG members

- Ask all CAG members to distribute and collect information and feedback regarding Rebuild by Design from the various constituencies
- Ask CAG members to distribute potential dates and times of various community meetings for core team (CAG chairs, elected officials, consultants, etc.) to present information

#### Community Meetings

- Additional community meetings may be organized to help stimulate and attract more meaningful input into the NEPA process. These meetings may include poster displays, facilitated discussions, and workshops with the project team and local public and elected officials.

#### **Weehawken Communication Plan**

##### Goal:

To work with the State/Dewberry team to develop engaging materials and a process that promotes the Rebuild by Design/NEPA process and timeline by establishing a communication network for ongoing dialogue and input by key stakeholders and stakeholder groups on issues, concerns and information sharing related to the various stages of development of the Rebuild

by Design Flood Control project.

Key Stakeholders:

- 1) Property owners and tenants in areas most prone to flash / storm surge.
- 2) Businesses in areas most prone to flash / storm surge
- 3) Vulnerable populations such as elderly, families with small children, individuals with disabilities or medical conditions.

Method:

Engage Community Advisory Group and allow CAG leadership and members to serve as surrogates in partnership with State and City to discuss RBD/NEPA with local groups and constituencies. Organize community meeting(s) in coordination with EIS-required hearings/meetings.

Outreach can include roundtable discussions, project presentations, email blasts, flyers for local patrons, etc.

Social Media/Technology

- Utilizing twitter, Facebook, and other social media tools to educate the public.
- Using movable/engaging demonstration project for use at community events.
- Utilize surveys (also work with CAG members to distribute to constituencies and collect).

Groups assigned to CAG members

- Ask all CAG members to distribute and collect information and feedback regarding Rebuild by Design from the various constituencies.
- Ask CAG members to distribute potential dates and times of various community meetings for core team (CAG chairs, elected officials, consultants, etc.) to present information.

Community Meetings

- Additional community meetings may be organized to help stimulate and attract more meaningful input into the NEPA process. These meetings may include poster displays, facilitated discussions, and workshops with the project team and local public and elected officials.

## **Jersey City Communication Plan**

### Goal:

To work with the State/Dewberry team to develop engaging materials and a process that promotes the Rebuild by Design/NEPA process and timeline by establishing a communication network for ongoing dialogue and input by key stakeholders and stakeholder groups on issues, concerns and information sharing related to the various stages of development of the Rebuild by Design Flood Control project.

### Key Stakeholders:

- 1) Property owners and tenants in areas most prone to flash / storm surge.
- 2) Businesses in areas most prone to flash / storm surge.
- 3) Vulnerable populations such as elderly, families with small children, individuals with disabilities or medical conditions.

### Method:

Engage Community Advisory Group and allow CAG leadership and members to serve as surrogates in partnership with State and City to discuss RBD/NEPA with local groups and constituencies. Organize or help publicize community meeting(s) in coordination with EIS- required hearings/meetings.

Outreach can include roundtable discussions, project presentations, email blasts, flyers for local patrons, etc.

### Social Media/Technology

- Utilizing twitter, Facebook, and other social media tools to educate the public.
- Using movable/engaging demonstration project for use at community events.
- Utilize surveys (also work with CAG members to distribute to constituencies and collect).

### Groups assigned to CAG members

- Ask all CAG members to distribute and collect information and feedback regarding Rebuild by Design from the various constituencies.
- Ask CAG members to distribute potential dates and times of various community meetings for core team (CAG chairs, elected officials, consultants, etc.) to present information.

## Community Meetings

- Additional community meetings may be organized to help stimulate and attract more meaningful input into the NEPA process. These meetings may include poster displays, facilitated discussions, and workshops with the project team and local public and elected officials.



## **Appendix A: Stakeholders**

An extensive mailing list of stakeholder groups has been developed and will continue to be developed throughout the life of the project. This list will be used to maintain ongoing contact with the community, transfer information, and publicize public meeting opportunities via meeting flyers and email notices. Presently, project stakeholders include the following:

- Bike Hoboken
- Community Emergency Response Team
- County of Hudson Division of Planning
- FEMA
- Hoboken Boys and Girls Club
- Hoboken Catholic Academy
- Hoboken Chamber of Commerce
- Hoboken City Council
- Hoboken Commuter Community
- Hoboken Cove Community Boathouse
- Hoboken Day Care
- Hoboken Developers
- Hoboken Dual Language Charter School (HOLA)
- Hoboken Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan
- Hoboken Historical Museum
- Hoboken Housing Authority
- Hoboken Jubilee Center
- Hoboken Quality of Life Coalition
- Hoboken RBD Citizen Advisory Committee
- Hoboken Resident Community Hopes
- Hoboken Shade Tree Commission
- Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy
- Jersey City Division of City Planning
- Mile Mesh
- Mayor of Hoboken Dawn Zimmer
- Mayor of Jersey City Steven Fulop
- Mayor of Weehawken Richard Turner
- NJDEP
- New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA)
- New Jersey Future
- New Jersey Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding
- NMFS
- NJHPO
- NJ TRANSIT
- New York Waterway
- NHSA
- Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and PATH
- Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSEG)
- Re.Invest Initiative (Rockefeller Foundation)

- New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez
- New Jersey Senator Cory Booker
- New York Waterway
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Together North Jersey
- USACE
- HUD
- USFWS
- Weehawken Township Council
- Weehawken Local CAG Leadership

# Response to Comments Document

## **RESPONSE DOCUMENT:**

The notice of this Citizen Outreach Plan (COP) proposal was published on the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) website on July 2, 2015, at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/floodhazard/docs/rdb-hudson-plan.pdf>. Community stakeholders will be engaged during each phase of the project (including feasibility/environmental review/planning, design, and construction/implementation). In developing this COP, the State complied with all U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) citizen participation plan requirements described in Section VI of Federal Register Notice FR-5696-N-11 and will comply with the public involvement requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR Sec. 1506.6 Public Involvement, and is responding to all comments below.

The following people provided comments on this COP during the public comment period:

### **Number – Commenter Name – Affiliation**

1. Amy Chester, Rebuild By Design
2. Megan Callus, New Jersey Future
3. Richard M. Weinstein, Citizen
4. Carter Craft, Citizen
5. Robert Androsiglio, Citizen
6. Jessica Seaton, Citizen
7. Steve Berczik, Citizen

A summary of the comments and the NJDEP responses follows. Where possible, comments that were made by more than one individual have been combined and answered as one. The number(s) in parentheses after each comment identifies the respective commenter listed above.

To read the entirety of the comments submitted, please go to page 9 of this Response to Comments document.

**1. Comment:** The commenter requested that due to the fact that the Hudson River project spans three cities with three different local Citizen Advisory Groups (CAG), one for each city, that each public meeting and workshop occur three times, once in each city. (1)

**Response:** There will be regional CAG meetings encompassing all three municipalities' CAGs. All CAG members from the three cities will be invited to participate. Each city is encouraged to hold additional meetings of their local CAGs at their discretion.

**2. Comment:** The commenter requested a list of Citizen Advisory Group members be posted via NJ DEP's website so members of the community/public are aware of their representatives CAG. (1)

**Response:** The NJDEP has included a list in the COP of all the interests and organizations that are represented on the CAGs but the NJDEP will not post personal information of any CAG members on the NJDEP's website. Co-chairs and CAG members will establish the communication network and outreach efforts in their communities.

**3. Comment:** The commenters request that there be adequate release of information, consistent community engagement and notification of public meetings throughout the lifespan of the Hudson River RBD project. (1, 2 & 4)

**Response:** The NJDEP has established an Office of Flood Hazard Risk Reduction Measures (OFHRRM) website at [www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov](http://www.rbd-hudsonriver.nj.gov) and an email has been established for the public to ask questions, and make comments at [rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov](mailto:rbd-hudsonriver@dep.nj.gov). The NJDEP's website will have outreach material and notification of all regional CAG and public meetings in English and Spanish. Additionally, as stated in the COP, three public meetings and one public hearing are currently anticipated as part of the NEPA process. As per HUD regulations, a public notice will be posted in the local media at least 15 days prior to the dates of all these meetings.

**4. Comment:** The commenters asked if the local and regional CAG meetings were open to the public, if the public could join the municipal CAGs and when the local and regional CAG

meetings were scheduled to be held. (1, 2 & 4)

**Response:** The CAG is a local entity created for the purposes of outreach into the community. CAG members act as representatives of the broad public in each community and are responsible for sharing information with their constituents as well as bringing constituents' questions or comments to CAG meetings and the Outreach Subcommittee. The NJDEP will provide notice of all regional CAG meetings on the NJDEP's OFHRRM website and inform everyone signed up for the NJDEP email listserv. All the NJDEP's regional CAG meetings are participation by invitation and include all Regional CAG members; however they are open to the public to observe. If any members of the public wish to represent their municipal CAG or find out the date, time and location of any separate municipal CAG meetings, they may contact their municipal Outreach Subcommittee member below or visit the following websites:

Hoboken: Vijay Chaudhuri - [Vchaudhuri@hobokennj.gov](mailto:Vchaudhuri@hobokennj.gov)

Juan Melli - [Jmelli@hobokennj.gov](mailto:Jmelli@hobokennj.gov)

Website: [www.hobokennj.org](http://www.hobokennj.org)

Hoboken Nixle Notification System ([local.nixle.com/city-of-hoboken](http://local.nixle.com/city-of-hoboken))

Hoboken Facebook and Twitter

Jersey City: Douglas Carlucci - [Dcarlucci@jcnj.org](mailto:Dcarlucci@jcnj.org)

Naomi Hsu - [HsuN@jcnj.org](mailto:HsuN@jcnj.org)

Website: [www.jerseycitynj.gov](http://www.jerseycitynj.gov)

Jersey City Facebook and Twitter

Weehawken: Giovanni Ahmad - [Gahmad@tow-nj.net](mailto:Gahmad@tow-nj.net)

Michael Kilkeary - [Mkilkeary@tow-nj.net](mailto:Mkilkeary@tow-nj.net)

Website: [www.weehawkin-nj.us](http://www.weehawkin-nj.us)

[Weehawken Facebook and Twitter](#)

**5. Comment:** The commenters want the NJDEP to provide physical locations in Hoboken, Weehawken and Jersey City that the public can obtain copies of outreach information. (1&2)

**Response:** Hoboken, Jersey City and Weehawken have all provided at least one location where the public can view copies of outreach materials. The locations are as follows:

Hoboken City Hall Clerk's Office at 94 Washington St. from 9am to 4pm weekdays and Hoboken Public Library reference desk at 500 Park Ave. during normal business hours.

Jersey City at the Jersey City Public Library's Jersey Room at 472 Jersey Ave. during normal business hours.

Weehawken City Hall at 400 Park Ave. from 9am to 5pm weekdays and at the Weehawken Public Library at 49 Hauxhurst Ave. during normal business hours.

**6. Comment:** The commenter requested that the COP use a consistent definition of vulnerable populations for the Hudson River project that includes the following:

“Individuals or groups whose circumstances present barriers to obtaining or understanding information, and/or to preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters, including those who have limited access to critical resources, those with limited English proficiency, seniors, and the disabled and medically or mentally compromised.” (2)

**Response:** The NJDEP agrees and has modified the definition of vulnerable populations.

**7. Comment:** The commenter requested that the COP provide regional and statewide organizations that have expertise in areas such as transportation, environmental protection, land-use planning, and housing with the opportunity to serve on the CAG. (2)

**Response:** There is a Technical Advisory group made up of all the state, local and federal regulatory agencies. This group meets monthly to review progress on the project and offer insight and direction as it develops.

**8. Comment:** The commenter requested that the CAG or its representatives should meet directly with the Executive Steering Committee, not just the Outreach Subcommittee. (2)

**Response:** While this suggestion is appreciated, the structure for communication between the Executive Steering Committee, the Outreach Subcommittee, and the Citizens Advisory Group will remain the same. This structure was approved as a part of Action Plan Amendment Number 12, Substantial Amendment, for the Third Allocation of CDBG-DR Funds, approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on April 20, 2015.

**9. Comment:** The commenter requested that the COP should provide for a minimum of quarterly CAG meetings, with the option of additional meetings if determined by its members and that Informal public meetings should be scheduled bi-annually as well as at key project milestones. (2)

**Response:** During the Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase of the work, meetings (CAG meetings, public meetings and a public hearing) will be scheduled during major milestones as dictated by the NEPA and stated in HUD's regulation 24 CFR part 58. After the completion of the EIS and issuance of the Record of Decision, it is anticipated that meetings will be scheduled at major milestones and/or at least once per quarter. The NJDEP will schedule these meetings with the regional CAG and public throughout the life of the Hudson River RBD project. NJDEP will notice these meetings through the website, emails, and press advisories where appropriate.

**10. Comment:** The COP should ensure stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input on the matrix itself, not just the final rankings from the matrix. (2)

**Response:** The COP allows input from stakeholders on the matrix in the section titled Screening Criteria/Metrics Meetings. The goal of these meetings is to understand and develop a list of criteria that will be included in the concepts screening matrix.

**11. Comment:** The commenter requested that the NJDEP should include resources to assist the CAGs in carrying out their activities and outreach efforts in the project budget. (2&3)

**Response:** Where possible, the NJDEP and its contractor(s) will attempt to provide



information and resources to help the CAGs carry out their outreach efforts with their constituents. No specific budget is currently available to carry this out though.

**12. Comment:** The commenter requested that expertise or funds to obtain expertise be provided to the CAG and low and moderate income residents to provide meaningful input to the project. (3)

**Response:** The State has contracted with Dewberry Engineers to provide technical experts and communication experts to work with the community as well as the state and municipalities on the feasibility of the project developed through the Rebuild By Design (RBD) process. While the state oversees the project, Dewberry and its experts are contracted to help reach our mutual goal of a flood risk reduction system that minimizes the impacts from surge and rainfall flood events. No additional funds will be provided.

**13. Comment:** The commenter requested that the NJDEP specifically cite examples of materials and of possible physical outcomes of this project, whether the project will be located on public property, or private property, and whether condemnation of private property is possible. It should also identify which Public Agencies or Authorities, if any, can be possible beneficiaries of these HUD Funds. (4)

**Response:** The goal of the current phase of the project, the Feasibility Study and EIS, is to determine the probable location and type of structures that are expected to be constructed. At this time, it is not possible to supply answers to these questions. Once complete, the public will have the opportunity to review, provide input and comment on any concepts or approaches that are identified.

**14. Comment:** The commenter states that recent development has increased the stormwater problems that have contributed to the flooding damage. (5)

**Response:** The NJDEP adopted the N.J.A.C. 7:8 Stormwater Management rules in 2004 and Hoboken, Jersey City and Weehawken all adopted their required Stormwater Management Plans in 2004. The municipalities and utility authorities also have implemented several local

ordinances and requirements to minimize stormwater flooding.

**15. Comment:** The commenter stated that litter and other debris leads to problems with the infrastructure and that the entire sewer system should be inspected and cleaned. (5)

**Response:** North Hudson Sewerage Authority and the Jersey City Municipal Utility Authority along with Hoboken, Jersey City and Weehawken have undergone significant work in inspecting, repairing and upgrading their infrastructure to meet the NJDEP's requirements and minimize stormwater damage.

**16. Comment:** The commenter is concerned that the timeline for the project will be too lengthy and that nothing will be done in the interim to alleviate the current flooding problems. (5)

**Response:** Unfortunately, projects of this size require a great deal of design and investigation before they are constructed. The intent is to proceed as expeditiously as practical to complete each phase, to implement the project, and to meet all HUD timeline requirements. Additionally, the local municipalities and utility authorities are actively working on stormwater related projects that will contribute to the reduction of stormwater damage prior to the completion of the Hudson River RBD project.

**17. Comment:** The commenter requested All Saints Episcopal Parish, located at 707 Washington Street in Hoboken, be included as part of the NJDEP's outreach efforts. (6)

**Response:** The NJDEP has revised the Community Outreach Plan to include All Saints Episcopal Parish in Hoboken as part of our outreach efforts and has added them as an additional group in the Hoboken Communication Plan under Churches/Religious Groups.

**18. Comment:** The commenter urged the NJDEP to work with local municipalities and ongoing municipal projects to achieve maximize benefit for all projects within the project area. (7)

**Response:** The NJDEP is currently working with the municipalities and utilities to incorporate all stormwater related projects into the Hudson River RBD project that are compatible with the project goals and timelines.

**19. Comment:** The commenter proposed utilizing stormwater and the stormwater infrastructure to help as a local fire suppression method. (7)

**Response:** The NJDEP will be looking at a wide variety of methods to help achieve the goals of the Hudson River RBD project through the four main points of Resist, Delay, Store and Discharge.

## **Comments**

### **Amy Chester, Rebuild By Design**

#### EIS Outreach

- 1) In addition to the draft EIS will be published in the federal register and posted on the Flood Hazard website, NJ DEP should consider providing paper copies of the draft EIS at key community locations. Possible locations could be the NJ DEP office and local libraries in Hoboken, Weehawken and Jersey City.
- 2) NJ DEP should additionally strive to ensure the meetings are promoted as widely as possibly by providing a handout of outreach materials and a calendar of events for community members via email, newsletter, website, or hard copy at meetings and in local storefronts.

#### Citizen Advisory Group

- 3) We applaud the efforts of the creation of the Citizen Advisory Group and the creation of solid and clear expectations of the CAG. However, it is unclear about the way in which people can join the CAG beyond through the NJDEP constituent service manager. We suggest a clear and transparent application process to ensure full participation amongst the community.
- 4) We would suggest a list of Citizen Advisory Group members be posted via NJ DEP's website so members of the community/public are aware of their representatives CAG. We suggest that NJ DEP generate a central email address, to provide a communication channel between the CAG and the community.
- 5) Please clarify that Citizen Advisory Group meetings will be public, and where citizens can find a schedule of meetings.

#### Public Meeting and Public Hearings

- 6) We appreciate that written comments will be accepted for public meetings and public hearings; however, please clarify how written comments from the community will be accepted and how and when citizens can obtain the agenda prior to the meeting, if they are not able to attend the meeting.
- 7) Due to the fact that the Hudson River project spans three cities, and that there are three corresponding CAG's for each city, we recommend that each public meeting and workshop occur three times, once in each city.

#### Ongoing Outreach

- 8) The NJDEP Project webpage should include the public comments received and the notes/minutes from the meetings as they occur.

## Social Media and Technology

- 9) We applaud the use of social media and technology to ensure participation. Please announce the twitter handle and facebook page on your website that will be used to inform the public of the status of the project, upcoming meetings, etc.

## Megan Callus, NJ Future

### 1) Outreach Subcommittee

The COP states, “The [Outreach] Subcommittee will be expected to significantly leverage the knowledge of local government officials or representatives who are best positioned to know the stakeholders, neighborhood leaders and vulnerable populations in their areas, and the most effective way to engage them in the RBD process.... This subcommittee’s sole responsibility will be outreach. This will include identifying stakeholders and incorporating input from vulnerable populations.”

However, vulnerable populations are defined differently in separate sections of the document. In addition, there are no details on how input from vulnerable communities will be solicited and incorporated. Defining what constitutes vulnerability is the first step to assuring vulnerable individuals and communities have a direct voice in decisions being made.

***Recommendation:*** The COP should use a consistent definition of vulnerable populations for the Hudson River project that includes the following:

*Individuals or groups whose circumstances present barriers to obtaining or understanding information, and/or to preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters, including those who have limited access to critical resources, those with limited English proficiency, seniors, and the disabled and medically or mentally compromised.*

The COP states that the Outreach Subcommittee should rely upon local government officials and representatives when forming a plan for identifying stakeholders and incorporating input from vulnerable populations. Government officials or representatives do not always fully engage all residents including vulnerable populations as well as other local, regional or statewide stakeholders. Leaving the development of the outreach plan and its implementation with leaders who may be reluctant to have open dialogue with residents, particularly those who may express different viewpoints or challenge the projects, is not sufficient. Moreover, the exclusion of critical voices could slow down projects by increasing tension, or it could prevent meaningful input, resulting in inferior results. In addition, undocumented individuals are often distrustful of government representatives, yet are an important vulnerable segment that needs

to be reached.

**Recommendation:** The COP should charge the Outreach Subcommittee with including in its comprehensive outreach plan the identification of representatives from agencies, organizations and churches that work with disenfranchised populations in the area who should be engaged in project development. These representatives can help identify the vulnerable communities and bring useful insights to the planning process.

## 2) Citizen Advisory Group/Outreach Committee

According to the COP, Citizen Advisory Group members will be selected by the mayors and/or their delegates. Keeping the CAG membership at the discretion of the mayors could prevent involvement of those who have different political or project views from the mayors. The result could be a committee of yes-men/women instead of a group of diverse stakeholders with various opinions/expertise and perspectives. The goal of the committee should be open, robust dialogue among individuals with different viewpoints to build consensus.

**Recommendation:** The COP should allow members of the general public to be given the opportunity to *volunteer* for the CAG.

**Recommendation:** NJDEP should include resources to assist the CAG in carrying out its activities and outreach efforts in the project budget.

The Hudson River project is multi-jurisdictional, affecting the surrounding region, with potential impacts on land use, transportation, recreation, the environment, and economic development. Yet no organizations outside of the three affected municipalities are included in the CAG.

**Recommendation:** The COP should provide regional and statewide organizations that have expertise in areas such as transportation, environmental protection, land-use planning, and housing with the opportunity to serve on the CAG.

The COP states, “the CAG will communicate with the Outreach Subcommittee representatives of their towns, who will bring issues and information to the larger Executive Steering Committee” and [The CAG will] “bring the priorities, issues and concerns of the larger community to the attention of the Outreach Subcommittee through their Mayors.” Having a system of intermediaries that carry information versus a direct line of communication to the Executive Steering Committee adds an unnecessary step and increases the potential for miscommunication.

**Recommendation:** The CAG or its representatives should meet directly with the Executive Steering Committee, not just the Outreach Subcommittee.

The COP states that, “The role of the NJDEP will be to ... solicit input from stakeholders *and the public* (emphasis added), and answer questions during CAG meetings.” But many important questions are not addressed: Can the public attend these meetings and provide input?

Will meetings occur monthly, quarterly, yearly? Are meetings at the discretion of the mayor or the CAG? The CAG is rather ill-defined and appears to be subordinate to the Outreach Subcommittee, with membership seemingly appointed by mayors and representatives in conjunction with the NJDEP. This is a recipe for getting cheerleaders on board, not for full participation of residents.

**Recommendation:** The COP should provide for a minimum of quarterly CAG meetings, with the option of additional meetings if determined by its members. Residents and stakeholders who are not on the CAG should be allowed to attend quarterly meetings to ask questions and offer comments.

### 3) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Outreach

New Jersey Future concurs with the concept of creating a regional CAG to coordinate the outreach associated with the feasibility analysis and environmental impact statement and commends the substantial number of CAG meetings that are part of this effort. However, questions remain as to the structure of these meetings. Will they consist of presentations with Q&A, interactive workshops with breakout sessions, charrettes? How will open dialogue between the engineering consultant and the public be established? Is there an opportunity for the public to attend these meetings or are they only invited to the three public meetings?

**Recommendation:** The COP should provide greater detail regarding the authority, composition and meeting structure of the regional CAG and the opportunity for non-members to participate.

### 4) Concepts Screening Workshops

According to the COP, “A screening matrix will be presented at each meeting, with our [subject matter experts] in attendance, to explain to stakeholders how we ranked each concept based on its impacts to the areas of study. Based on input from the stakeholder groups, the rankings will be confirmed or changed.” Granting stakeholders the opportunity to provide comment on the rankings is commendable but not adequate.

**Recommendation:** The COP should ensure stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input on the matrix itself, not just the final rankings from the matrix.

### 5) Public Meetings and Public Hearing

According to the COP, three meetings and one hearing will be open to the public. Per HUD regulations, a public notice will be posted in the local media at least 15 days prior to the date of these meetings. One of the goals of RBD was to break the mold of traditional citizen outreach to create more robust models. Following the traditional approach of limiting outreach to posting noticed of meetings in local media conflicts with RBD goals.

**Recommendation:** The COP should employ much broader and more comprehensive means of informing the public about meetings. Flyers should be posted in supermarkets, public and private housing and businesses. A primary contact list of stakeholders should be assembled that includes residents and neighborhood groups who are near or adjacent to the proposed project; residents or organizations who represent vulnerable populations, community boards, community leaders, local community civic

and recreational organizations, environmental and business groups; neighborhood religious establishments; and people who have expressed an interest in the proposed project, among others. These individuals and groups should be utilized to distribute information via their mailing lists and community contacts. Notification of official public meetings with a project information sheet should be mailed to all stakeholders. Materials should be translated for non-English speaking populations.

While public hearings assure, at a minimum, the rights of interested citizens to attend and/or testify, formal meetings can be intimidating, and hearings can be dominated by those who are more comfortable with public speaking. Such hearings may not be the best format to encourage comment from a wide cross-section of community residents, may not fit into citizens' busy schedules, and often leave little, if any, room for discussions.

***Recommendation:*** If the public is not invited to the CAG meeting, for each public hearing NJDEP, the engineering consultant, or the municipalities should hold a supplemental, less formal meeting in the evening within the same week. To encourage participation from all citizens, these should be open meetings with facilitators, translators, break-out areas and comment tables.

#### 6) Vulnerable Populations

New Jersey Future is encouraged to see specific attention being paid to vulnerable populations and the inclusion of these residents in the CAG. However, as stated above, who is included in the definition of “vulnerable populations” is not clear or consistent.

***Recommendation:*** As stated above, New Jersey Future recommends the definition of vulnerable populations include individuals with low to moderate incomes, those with limited English proficiency, seniors, and the disabled and medically or mentally compromised. A rigorous outreach effort should be made to include representatives from all communities and ensure that the concerns of vulnerable communities are addressed. New Jersey Future also strongly recommends using the EIS review processes to promote environmental justice by analyzing the environmental, human health, economic, and social effects of the proposed actions on vulnerable residents.

#### 7) Public Meetings/Listening Sessions – all residents

***Recommendation:*** Informal public meetings should be scheduled bi-annually as well as at key project milestones.

#### 8) Ongoing Outreach

New Jersey Future applauds the extensive outreach effort proposed by the NJDEP. However, it is critical to note that there are residents who do not have computer access.

***Recommendation:*** The NJDEP should designate a physical public education and information repository. The repository should contain a copy of all information relevant to the proposed project, in all relevant languages. The location should be close to the proposed project and easily accessible by stakeholders (for example, public libraries or community centers), with evening or weekend hours. Individuals and groups outlined in



the Communications plan should be utilized to distribute information via their mailing lists and community contacts.

#### 9) Appendix A: Stakeholders

The COP includes a mailing list of project stakeholders. With the exception of Together North Jersey, the list fails to mention any of the nonprofit organizations, such as NY/NJ Baykeeper and New Jersey Future, that have also been actively involved in the project.

***Recommendation:*** All active stakeholders, including local, regional and statewide non-profit organizations, should be included in the list of stakeholders.

#### **Richard M. Weinstein, Citizen**

1) I have read the COP and although it is a commendable effort to engage the public, stakeholders, the Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) and low and moderate income residents of the build areas by apprising them of the actions of Dewberry, NJDEP and NJT at all stages of the project; by giving them an opportunity to provide input to actual RBD facilities developments (resist, delay, store and discharge) and the development of the environmental impact statement, it does not provide the expertise or funds to obtain such expertise in order to provide the same meaningful input to the Project as that provided by the Project Manager and Dewberry.

This imbalance of expertise is even more significant since the COP clearly and specifically references the different times and extent of expertise which will be expected from Dewberry during the RBD process. For example, although under the section entitled "Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Outreach" provides that: "The Project Manager and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from Dewberry will attend each meeting to help inform stakeholders and the public about technical aspects that are being addressed.", it is silent about what input technical input the public, the CAG and low and moderate income residents of the build areas will also provide. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which is designed to disclose environmental impacts of actions by State, Federal and local public bodies when Federal monies are being expended, involves the consideration of the complex relationships and impacts of a specific project on the environment. Such consideration and understanding of those impacts to surface waters, air quality, subsurface waters, traffic and public health requires input from legal and other experts in planning, zoning, hydrology, environmental science and civil, mechanical, chemical and electrical engineering. With such assistance the public, the CAG and low and moderate income residents of the build areas, which HUD's Community Development Grant Program regulations require, can participate by providing alternative designs and methods of accomplishing the goals of RBD which can be proposed to the Project Manager and SMEs which will have the level of detail and expertise required to be seriously considered and given weight in the decision process. This same scenario repeats itself in the Scoping/Data Gathering Meetings; the Screening Criteria/Metrics Meetings and

Concepts Screening Workshops where in each case “Dewberry’s SMEs “will be on hand” or “in attendance but nothing is said about what kind of input the public, CAG and low and moderate income residents of the build areas will have. Public participation should be considered be broader than informing the public and educating it as to the process and the proposed RBD constructions projects.

What I am proposing, of course costs money which the COP neither recognizes nor provides to the public, stakeholders, the Citizen’s Advisory Group (CAG) and low and moderate income residents of the build area in order to participate in the RBD process. The NJDEP-NJT MOA references a budget of \$8,587,526.68 for funding its activities, part of which is an undisclosed sum for “project costs of Dewberry and its Subcontractors.” No part of that large sum out of \$230,000,000 has been provided to the public, CAG, and low and moderate income residents of the build areas for their participation in NJDEP’s proposed RBD outreach proposal. Why can’t some of the \$8,587,526.68 or part of the undisclosed portion of that sum being received by Dewberry be dedicated to ensuring meaningful and true public participation. A budget should be included which will be available to hire on-board legal and technical consultants who can assist the citizens affected by the future RBD projects to achieve a final products that meets everybody’s needs or those that can reasonably be accommodated after a complete deliberative process has been provided by the NJDEP, DCA, HUD and USEPA.

### **Carter Craft, Citizen**

#### **1) More Transparency of the Project and It's Potential Scope and Impacts**

The proposed Outreach Plan seeks to "to provide a transparent and inclusive community outreach and public participation plan allowing all citizens and stakeholders in the Hudson River region the opportunity to participate in the planning, design and implementation of the project."

I believe in order to be transparent the Project Team and all project materials must specifically cite examples of possible physical outcomes of this project. Are we talking about dikes, walls, berms, pump stations, new drainage systems? It should also be made clear whether these interventions can be made on public property, or private property, and whether condemnation of private property is possible. It should also identify which Public Agencies or Authorities, if any, can be possible beneficiaries of these HUD Funds.

2) Add Additional Elements to the Proposed "multi-faceted public participation process that includes: the establishment of an Executive Steering Committee, an Outreach Subcommittee, and Citizen Advisory Groups; Public Meetings; a dedicated website; an email listserv; a citizen complaint procedure; and press releases.

I think to be effective at engaging people this list of tools should also include:

a) Project Flyer in multiple languages. This flyer should be updated quarterly, and always include information on the next public meeting, guidance on where to submit written input into this process, as well as details on how much money is at stake in this project

b) Powerpoint slide shows that are downloadable from the website of the DEP, the municipalities, and others. The Project team, municipal and County officials, and/or CAG and/or local Community Emergency Response Teams should be asked and empowered to deliver these presentations. Talking points will be helpful.

Both of these types of materials should be geared towards audiences including -

i. General public ii. business groups iii. family-related groups iv. school groups - including elementary school, middle school, and high school. Today's 5th graders will be voters in 2022.

For 2a and 2b above I believe this list of tools should include c) on-line surveys as well as d) table top displays and informational materials available at i. major local fairs (e.g Spring and Fall Hoboken Arts & Music Festival) as well as ii. weekend activities for youth recreation leagues, particularly Mama Johnson Field, 1600 Park, and Stevens Park/ Little League Field.

### 3) Wider Participation in CAG activities and meetings

I believe attendance to and participation in CAG meetings should be open to all citizens. I also believe that regional and state civic, environmental, business and other interested groups should be allowed to participate.

### 4) Better Understanding How the Potential Concepts Screening Workshops

The Community Outreach Plan should help ensure stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input into the development of the matrix itself. People need to understand and have some say in HOW these decisions will get made, rather than being given a limited number of options from which to eventually "just choose."

## **Robert Androsiglio, Citizen**

1) Because developers have been allowed to build and reduce impervious land area, citizen's should redirect rainwater from roof areas into backyard gardens. Redirecting roof leaders and gutters is a cheap, quick improvement. This would help DELAY + STORE the inflow from going into the combined sewer system. I believe NJ DEP has a regulation against filling in flood plains.

2) Because developers have been allowed to build without determining the impact of their

increased flow into the collection system they should be forced to pay for upgrading the collection system or pay to clean out the pipes to maximize their hydraulic capacity. Flooding in the downtown Shoprite area has never been this way in the past. Something changed.

3) Citizen's should become aware that littering the streets results in clogged sewer lines. The entire sewer system should be surveyed and cleaned.

4) The proposed plan will take too long to complete. Having 9 consulting firms making a "perfect" plan wastes limited funds and does not help the immediate flooding problem. This level of planning reminds me of the wasted time put into the Hoboken 9/11 memorial. The teardrop design could have been made stable with extra supports rather than scrapping the whole design. I owned a home impacted by the tide coming over the banks of the Hudson River, I would insist on sandbagging the North and South ends and have PA of NY/NJ sandbag their railyard rather than a "perfect" million dollar design.

### **Jessica Seaton, Citizen**

1) I received a copy of the Hoboken outreach plan for rebuild by design. I note that the list of churches/religious organizations does not include All Saints Episcopal Parish, located at 707 Washington Street. I hope that someone will add All Saints to the list; its congregation has always had a strong community focus and could not doubt make a positive contribution to your efforts.

### **Steve B, Citizen**

1) Possibility of below grade permanent installation of pipeline beneath streets:

Current Hoboken street construction ends soon [week of Aug. 10, 15] :

#### **Milling Schedule:**

July 27 – Bloomfield Street (Observer Highway up to 4 th Street)

July 28 – Bloomfield Street (3 rd Street to 8 th Street)

July 29 – Bloomfield Street (7 th Street to 12 th Street, Southerly half of Intersection)

July 30 – Bloomfield Street (11 th Street, Northerly half of intersection to 14 th Street)

July 31 – 8th Street (Castle Point Terrace to Hudson Street) and 9 th Street (Castle Point Terrace to Hudson Street)

Aug. 3 – Madison Street (13 th Street to 15 th Street)

#### **Resurfacing Schedule:**

July 29 – Bloomfield Street (Observer Highway up to 4 th Street)

July 30 – Bloomfield Street (3 rd Street to 8 th Street)

July 31 – Bloomfield Street (7 th Street to 12 th Street, Southerly half of Intersection)

Aug. 3 – Bloomfield Street (11 th Street, Northerly half of intersection to 14 th Street)  
Aug. 4 – 8 th Street (Castle Point Terrace to Hudson Street) and 9 th Street (Castle Point Terrace to Hudson Street)  
Aug. 5 – Madison Street (13 th Street to 15 th Street)

Line Striping/Pavement Marking Installation Schedule:

Aug. 3 – Bloomfield Street Installation (Observer Highway up to 4 th Street)  
Aug. 4 – Bloomfield Street (3 rd Street to 8 th Street)  
Aug. 5 – Bloomfield Street (7 th Street to 12 th Street, Southerly half of Intersection)  
Aug. 6 – Bloomfield Street (11 th Street, Northerly half of intersection to 14 th Street)  
Aug. 7 – 8th Street (Castle Point Terrace to Hudson Street) and 9 th Street (Castle Point Terrace to Hudson Street)  
Aug. 10 – Madison Street (13 th Street to 15 th Street)

2) Fire Fighting within flood waters:

Appears as though end of August some firm, maybe Dewberry, could open a street for plumbing fire truck pumper compatible pipelines / auxiliary hydrants for;

1] removal of flood waters.

2] supplemental fire suppression water delivery auxiliary to existing fire hydrants.

Result for Hoboken residents is witness “low hanging fruit” project that provides comfort toward any future inundation arriving prior to complete storm surge protection project(s) being ready for use.

North Hudson Sewerage Authority representative is aware of such a plumbing effort and is in favor of considering on a “trial basis”. Presumably there is at least one Hoboken street along which such auxiliary pipeline would contribute to fire fighting and be useful in speeding the removal of storm surge flood waters.

Such a small “oneoff” project can be appreciated during next public meeting and compared in effectiveness, cost, etc. against entire project components in progress after the completion of said “oneoff” project on a “trial basis”.

Commentary has circulated regarding damaged water mains, submerged hydrants and possible other damage to existing fire fighting water supply while knee deep flood water is plentiful.

The risk of damage to fire truck pump from ingesting trash laden flood water: Surplus USPS delivery vehicle towed by fire truck to scene makes suitable flood water filter when;

a] glazing replaced by 1st layer of screen material, 2nd layer of finer grade installed interior to 1st layer.

b] additional screened water entry cut out of nonglazed area(s) if so desired

b] engine and driveline components upline of the suspension wheelbase removed.

c] towing package installed to front

d] fire pumper compatible pipe fittings installed

1] suitable flex/pivot finer grade screened interior pickup tube installed

o] Optional pump installed within. See below.

Firefighters unhitching, tipping off of wheelbase to lay in flood waters and connecting flexible, suction, hardline to, most likely “rooftop” connection enables filtered flood waters to be pumped for firefighting.

3) NonFire Fighting within flood waters, ie. removal of flood water:

Nonfire fighting use of above modified surplus USPS vehicle(s) would be plumbed into the auxiliary hydrants for removal of flood waters understreet pipeline for fire truck pumping into existing drainage sump / Hudson river [or storm surge holding tank(s)].

Addition of a pump w/i the USPS vehicle will free up fire truck pump while adding power [electric] requirement. Like the Fire Truck use; flexible discharge hose required. No suction side hard line to be plumbed.

4) JOBS resulting from these equipment requirements:

Vocational Technical school students can modify USPS vehicle(s) for above purposes. At a rate of just one or two per school year there will be some for other communities to be sold to cover costs. Yet Open Sourcing will keep costs contained and profit motive out. USPS vehicle laying on its side, while pumping, should be capable of ingesting a minimum of 2 inches of standing water so as to be useful in removing flood waters down to street surface level bounded by curbs and drains. Drains which can presumably be primed to handle 2 inch street water level at the curb. In consideration of 2 feet of more street level flood water at curb rendering the drain system ineffective there is a need for suction side flexible hard line connection(s) from manual pickup wands to a removal suction side of either the above mentioned auxiliary street plumbing for such purpose, Fire Truck / USPS pump